[Yankee Innkeeper]

1

Yankee Folk

YANKEE INNKEEPER

“A lot of business went with the horse.”

PICKING HIS TEAM

Funny, how many hotel keepers started in a livery stable. But then the livery stable was a big part of the old hotel, so perhaps it was natural enough. A lot of people picked their hotelbecause of a bang-up livery. The [Pemigewasset?] House was railroad owned. The stage line from there to the Profile House was also railroad owned, and there was stiff, sometimes bitter competition between them and other hotels and pod-teams, as they called the private teams.

Back in the Seventies, when we were running the old Plymouth, Governor Hatt Head came up with his staff and officials to inspect the fish hatchery which the State was running at Livermore Falls. Governor Head had invited Governor Long of Massachusetts, and they were to have a big time.

The [Pemigewasset?], of course, made the arrangements. They collected some fifteen teams to convey the party from the Plymouth Station to Livermore Falls. The Square was full of teams, but they didn't invite me to send over my team. The [Pemigewasset?] had the finest rig they could put up, waiting beside the platform, handy for the Governor's party. I sent down my team, however, best one I had, but I couldn't get near the platform — had to stand away off, other side of Square.

Train pulled in. Governor Head, accompanied by and Governor Long and their crowd, got off. [Pemigewasset?] folks rushed up.

“Your team right here, Governor, right this way.”

But Governor Head wasn't to be rushed. He stood, looking around, over the heads of the crowd, getting his bearings.

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“Right here, Governor, for you and Governor Long. This is your team.”

But the Governor had spied my team across the Square, and he was on his way across over .

“Capable of picking my own team, I guess,” he flung over his shoulder said .

“Rather like the looks of this one over here. Pretty good-looking team, hey, Long? Guess I'll take this one,” he called back to the station. “Get that other team out of the way, and let this man drive up there!”

We stood a minute after the Governor and his party got in. I had a twelve-passenger wagon.

“What we waiting for?” fretted the Governor.

“Waiting for the rest to get ready,” I explained.

“Shucks! Never mind about the rest. We're ready, aren't we? Let's be going. Rest can come on when they're ready.”

We went. Those four horses moved off with that loaded twelve-passenger [/Wagon?] like birds. The rest weren't even in sight when we came to the Baker River Bridge. There

was a dip in the road there, like a hollow, and a sharp rise on beyond up to high ground. I slacked up the reins at the bridge, and “tohked” to the horses. By gosh, they sailed up that hill to take your breath.

At the top Governor Head turned to Governor Long.

“Guess I'm not such a bad picker of teams, after all, eh, Long?” Insert I TRAVEL AS I PLEASE (next page)

HOW TOMMY GLISKY LICKED THE TOWN

Town meeting time was one great wrestling chance. The town hall in Plymouth was diagonally across the street from the Plymouth House, and you could see ‘em from the hotel, forming a ring. Two of ‘em would get into the center and go at it. The winner would take on another and so on — keep “I TRAVEL AS I PLEASE”

Yes, sir, teams counted something for a hotel in these days. The [/Railroad?] as like that, wanted all the business. One of their drivers out of Plymouth used to try to get it for the railroad folks. But when we were in the Plymouth House we made up our minds that we would try to get our share of it, and we did.

I noticed two men get off the train, when I was nosing around the depot after business. Nice-looking man. One had a fine moustache. On the way, they said, to the Profile House. Goerge George Fifield stepped up, assuming that thinking they were , naturally, going up by the railroad coach. “Gentlemen,” I butted in, “now which would you rather do? Go up through our beautiful Notch by this railraod railroad stage, whooping at full speed, making time? Or go up by a private team, same price, four dollars each — stop along the way when you see anything you'd like to look at, or get out now and then if you want to?”

That idea kind of struck ‘em. They seemed to think my proposition sounded good. But the other driver wasn't the man to let business slip out of his hands without a fight. “[Ho?],”

said he, “you go up by this man's teams, ‘n, you won't more'n get out of the village before one of the horses'll fall down in a fit. Then where'll you be?” “Tell you what you do,” said I. “My stable isn't but a little way from here, just around the corner. You come along with me and have a look at the teams I drive.” They considered. “We will,” they finnally finally agreed, “we'll come around after supper. We're going to stop here at the [Pemigewasset?] over night, and we'll be around.” True to their word, I saw them coming after supper. I met them and took them to the stables. There were eight handsome dapple-grays there, all alike, heads right up in the air — perky. “There, gentlemen, are the horses[.?] Do you see any among ‘em that look [‘fifty?] ‘fitty’ ?” They said they didn't. “Which are the ones you are planning to hitch up for us?” “They'll all match. Any of them or all of them will work together. You pick out any you want. I'll hitch ‘em up.” “Oh, no, you do the picking. We're satisfied. We'll go up with you in the morning.”

We started in the morning, a little before the railroad coach got off, four horses drawing a twelve-passenger wagon, full. At Livermore Falls I asked them if they wanted to stop and have a look. No, they didn't. And so we went on, taking it easy, the grays moving at a comfortable trot, passengers looking about, enjoying themselves, until my rival came up behind with the six-horse railroad coach, and tried to pass. I spoke to the grays. They lengthened their stride, just enough to keep ahead of the other coach. One of the men called my attention to the coach following us. “I think he wants to pass you,” he said. “I know he does,” I replied, “but I don't think he will.” I let out the lines a little, gave the horses more head, and they moved out away from that coach up those Notch grades like birds! The roads hadn't been graded then, for automobiles, either.

We kept a good lead right into the Flume House. I know I had taken out my horses, and was looking after them in the barn before the stage came in. I always looked after my own horses, to be sure they got what they needed. As I came across the road back to the hotel, the boss of the coach-line was giving the men a piece of his mind. ”... and how do you fellows think the railroad's goin' to run these coaches, give you proper service, if you don't patronize them? The railroad run's ‘em for your accomodation accommodation . You've

no business to hire these little pod-wagons. You ought to travel on the regular coaches." "Look here, mister," the doctor was replying saying . I had learned He'd told me , coming up, that my chief passenger he was a doctor from Easton, Pennsylvania. "I've traveled all over the world, and I travel as I please. No driver of any railroad coach is going to tell me how to travel. You're no fit man to speak for the railraod railroad . You're insulting." He handed him back as good as the driver sent.

The doctor whirled turned to me as I came up. "Going back to-night?" he asked. "I'm planning to, soon's I get supper and the horses fed." "Well, don't. Stay over here and take us the rest of the way to the Profile House in the morning. I was intending to go up by the railroad stage in the morning, but I wouldn't ride on this man's coaches. [?"] MR. HEMENWAY's BEAR

It was while we were keeping the Black Mountain House that I first met Augustus Hemenway—you know, the man who built that gymnasium for Harvard College. Cost $175,000. He came up there one day, just after we had closed up for the season, or just as we were closing up, and wanted to stay with us a while. "Don't believe we can, Mr. Hemenway," I told him. "We're closing up for the season, letting our waitresses go, cooks and everything. Don't see how we can." "Just what I want , " he rather pleaded said [.?] "want to be alone, all by ourselves just all by ourselves. We can get along fine." He had his invalid wife with him, and her nurse.

We finally made arrangements for him to stay awhile, he seemed to like it so well. The hotel was up among the pine woods — acres and acres of 'em — and roads running all out among 'em. Just the place for sick people. " He was a very unassuming simple man. I never suspected that he was worth what you would call "money." Well, they settled down for a time with us. He loved to roam around the stables, look at the horses. They were just about the handsomest horses you could find anywhere in the state. Some of them were black — black — not dull — or blue-like. Some were gray, some dapple gray. Matched up in pairs and fours, red halters, heads all up, snappy — they were horses.

One of the horses I was especially proud of. Black as a crow's wing, with a tail almost sweeping the ground. Two white legs behind, white star in his forehead, arched neck, bright eyes. Man who had him before me paid $500 for him. Mr. Hemenway was out one morning visiting the barn. I was in the carriage room and the door happened to be wide open toward the woods. A partridge came booming along, full speed, struck against the open door, and broke its neck.

“Why,” said Mr. Hemenway startled, “you have partridges thick as that up here?”

“Oh, the woods are full of ‘em,” I told him, “Just full of ‘ em.” That was back in the early ‘80's, you remember.

“Well,” said he, “I'll have to telegraph back home and have my man bring up my gun and my dog. You and I'll go hunting.”

Mind you he said “bring[,?]” not “send.” That set me thinking. If it had been me, I should have had ‘em sent up by express. But not Mr. Hemenway.

Next day up came the man and gun and the dog. He had his dinner and Mr. Hemenway sent him back home.

“Now, Mr. Willis,” he said, “we're going to get some of those birds.” He wanted me to go with him. “You know where the birds are, don't you?” I said I did.

The dog nosed around, this way and that, until pretty soon he stiffened into a point, his nose reaching out for the bird.

“Now, Mr. Willis, you stand right over ther there . He'll likely come down by you if I don't get him. Then you try him.”

He waited a moment.

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“All ready?”

“Flush him:” he snapped to the dog.

Pouf: Up came the bird.

“Bang[!?]” went Hemenway's gun. Never touched a feather.

The partridge sailed down across me and I downed him.

“Get him?” Hemenway rushed up, all excited.

“Right over there, foot of that tree.” I pointed to where the bird had come down.

“Great shot? Wonderful shot! “ He was delighted over it, couldn't seem to get over it.

He wandered ahead of me into the woods. I lost sight of him a few minutes, then the dog barked, kept on barking, all excited, and Hemenway came rushing back toward me.

“[Got?] a bear!” he called when he came in sight, “a bear, up a tree. Dog's got him treed!”

We went back to the dog. I smiled.

“Mr. Hemenway,” I said, “sorry, but that isn't a bear. It's a porcupine.”

Twas a monster porcupine — black, 'twas, too. He was awful tickled over that.

“First time I ever saw one of those follows in my life. Say you stay here and let me go up and shoot him. You hold the dog, and....”

“No!”

He looked at me a little surprised.

“Well, then, I'll hold the dog and you go up and shoot him.”

“No!”

A real question was in the way he looked at me this time.

“you hold the dog and we'll both go up and shoot it.”

“Oh.”

I explained how, if a dog got near one of these those porcupines and he wasn't quite dead, or if the dog nosed a dead one, he'd get his nose full of quills and they would work their way into him and kill him in course of time, unless they were cut out. We blew the old fellow out of the tree. Hemenway stooped over it for a minute.

“What you doing?” I called back.

He was pulling out some quills with a pair of pliers, and he put them in his pocket-book for a souvenir, by gosh! “ 3 at it till they got tired and no more contestants showed up. “Ring wrestling,” we called it.

Used to be a fellow, Tommy Glisky — lumberjack he was [md?] short, smallish fellow. You'd never pick him out for a wrestler, but, by gosh, he was. There wasn't anybody could beat him. Every year he'd be at those town meeting wrestling rings and lick everybody. Tackle anybody, no matter how big they were, and lick ‘em. He had some tricks he'd got up in the woods — I don't know what they were.

We kept telling him that some day he'd get his. If he kept on picking fights with any and everybody, he'd run up against the wrong man some day. But he'd laugh and go right on licking ‘em — till he ran up against Sullivan. Big Irishman, Sullivan was. They were building

the Pemigewasset Valley Railroad at that time, and Sullivan came up with the track gang. I don't know what his first name was. I know he had a brother, though.

'twas a dance that brought those two fellows together [md?] up at the Grafton House, in West Thornton. Not a hotel exactly [md?] more ran on the tavern plan. They were putting on a big dance that night. Glisky was there, with a bevy of girls he'd brought along. 'twas in the winter time, and there were sleighloads of people from all around. And Sullivan. It all broke out over a cotillion they were forming. Glisky was doing it, and Sullivan told him he wasn't doing it right.

“You get out o' here and mind your own business,” Glisky told him. “I know how to form a cotillion.”

“All right,” said Sullivan, “If that's the way you feel about it, you go ahead. You make up your crowd there, and I'll make up my crowd over here[,?] on this side.”

But Tommy couldn't stand that sort of thing, not before these girls and all, and he came over to Sullivan, said something to him — fighting talk. I guess.

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Must have been, for Sullivan up and slammed him. The fight was on right there on the dance floor [md?] girls and all.

It was an awful fight, but Sullivan licked him — licked him terribly. Licked the daylights out of Tommy, right there. Glisky managed to get away at last, and got down [md?] the dance floor was at the top of the house, fourth floor, I think — and out-of-doors.

The dance broke up, then and there. Some of the boys got hold of Sullivan.

“You got to get out o' here,” they told him. “This ain't the end o' this — not with Glisky it ain't. He won't stand for a beating up like this. He'll come back, and you want to be watching out when he comes.”

They rushed Sullivan downstairs into the bar-room, and they hung around, keeping guard over Sullivan until they were sure Glisky had gone off. But Glisky didn't go. He sat out in a sleigh with some pal that had brought him over, and waited.

Sullivan was sitting up on the bar, getting about ready to go when the door opened suddenly and Glisky rushed in and made for him. Sullivan had just time to scream: “Look out, he's got a knife!” when Glisky struck.

He slashed the Irishman in the throat, cut his windpipe half in two [md?] wicked. In the excitement Glisky got away. The doctor was called [md?] rushed in, tied up Sullivan, pasted him together with some bandages, patted around his throat with his fingers, and said he guessed he'd be all right. But Sullivan wasn't all [right?]. That round kept on bleeding inside, and in couple of days he was dead.

My step-father, Mr. Buchanan, was deputy sheriff that year, and they sent for him. He went over there, did what he could, but Glisky had disappeared. They found a picture of him somewhere, and Mr. Buchanan sent it to Boston and asked the help of the Boston police in finding him. They sent copies of that picture all over. But Glisky had gone — disappeared.

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It went on about a year, I guess. Inside a year the Boston police sent up word that they'd got Glisky located, out in the woods of Michigan, and could produce him for $500. Well, Sullivan didn't leave any money behind him, and his brother couldn't raise five hundred dollars, and the town wouldn't. The town was awful poor — said Glisky and Sullivan

weren't local follows, just transients — didn't see why they should bother about ‘em, put up any money on their account.

Glisky got off, scot free, so far as I know. I never heard anything more about him.

OLD ROCKING CHAIR

Take these old rocking chairs we're sitting in. Comfortable old chairs, aren't they. Don't make such chairs now. Fit your back and arms, and the seat rounds down just right. That little low one over there's my wife's favorite chair. Oh, hundred years old, I guess, more or less.

The other day a lady was in here. Saw that little mirror up on the wall there—that one in the black and gold frame, with the picture of The Dancing Girl on it. Said it was worth three hundred dollars. I guess she wanted to compliment us, or something. Bet she wouldn't offer three hundred dollars if she was trying to buy it.

I made a venture into the antique business once [md?] only once, I don't know much about it, but I saw a grandfather clock once when I was at the Black Mountain House, and I wanted it for the hotel. 'twas a handsome clock, all decorated with gilt and these spires and knobs and frills. Out in a country home, it was.

“How much you take for the clock?” I said to the man. “Why, I dunno,” said he, “dunno what they really are worth.” “Twenty-five dollars, say?” “Oh, no, no. Wouldn't sell for twenty-five dollars, would we, Ma?” referring to his wife. “Would you sell it for fifty dollars?” His eyes kind of lighted 6 up. He considered a moment. “I dunno, dunno's we want to sell it at all, do we, Ma?” She considered. “I dunno's we really need it,” she said. “S'pose we could get along without it.” “Fifty dollars. Well, I dunno. Fifty dollars sounds fair, don't it, Ma! I dunno. S'posen we might's well let it go. Fifty dollars. Well, yes, you can have it for fifty dollars.”

I took it back to the hotel, wiped it up, set it out.

Man came up from New York the next summer. He looked like he could afford almost anything he wanted, and he got to wanting that clock. It was a beauty. Wanted to know if I'd sell it, and what I'd take for it. “A hundred dollars,” I told him. “Oh, no, no. I couldn't afford to pay a hundred dollars for it. Out of the question.” But he kept wanting it, looking at it. I let it set. Didn't say anything more about it. The day he went away he asked me about it again. “Well,” I said, “You've been a pretty good customer of mine. We're pretty good friends and all. I'll make it eighty dollars. “He went off with it, mighty tickled to get it.

'twas a great rage about those years of folks coming up into the country here and hunting up grandfather clocks. They got all they wanted, I guess. Some folks down Boston way helped out some. I don't know who manufactured them, exactly, but the racket was this. They made any quantity of imitation grandfather clocks, and they were such good imitations it took an expert to tell ‘em from the genuine. They looked like a hundred years old, all right.

Way they sold ‘em was to bring up a lot and set them around in old back farmhouses and let the families have the use of them, on the agreement that when these antique hunters came around they would let the antiquers have ‘em for whatever they could stick ‘em for. Then the makers and the fellows who sold ‘em would split on whatever they got.

No, rackets aren't confined to the city places. These old Yankees up here in the backwoods can give some of these city fellows handicaps.

7

I took a party once from Black Mountain House over to Crawford Notch. They wanted to visit the old Willey House. I remember it was kept at the time by Azariah Moore. You've heard about the Willey Slide, how the whole family was destroyed by rushing out doors when the slide came, and how if they'd stayed in the house they'd have been saved. The

slide split behind up the house and went both sides of it — never touched the house. Lots of legends clustered about the old house. One was that there was a crippled old Grandma Willey who couldn't run but when the rest did and sat in her wooden rocking chair while the slide went by on her both sides.

At the time my crowd was up there they were very curious about an old wooden rocking chair which stood in the middle of the room. It was pretty dilapidated, chopped up, pieces hacked out of it, “What's that chair?” one of them asked. “Why,” said Azariah Moore, “that's old Grandma Willey's rocking chair. One she sat in time of the slide, and was saved. Ain't you never heard about it?” They never had, so he told ‘em. Nothing will do with these summer people but they must have a souvenir from every place they visit, and as Azariah explained that the condition of the chair was due to the hanger of visitors for souvenirs, my people asked if they might have a chip. “Oh, certainly,” he consented. “Everybody teased me so for chips along back — they even whittled ‘em out of the chair when I wa'n't looking. ‘Go ahead,’ and I even furnished the hatchet to cut out the chips with. Here 'tis, if you want to use it.”

They did, and as they were busy using it, Azariah slyly crooked his finger at me from the door to come out into the kitchen toward the bar room. “ you You see, Willie,” he told me in a low voice, “when I found the summer 8 folks was so possessed to lug away souvenirs of every curiosity in the mountains I got to providing ‘em. I provide ‘em old Grandma Willey chair in there. I buy ‘em new, scratch and bang ‘em up, hack ‘em up, till they look pretty old, for a starter, and then turn ‘em over to the summer folks, and they do the rest. That's the third old Grandma Willey chair they've had this season. Oh, of course, they give me a little something [md?] a quarter a chip — standard price.”

That was too good to keep, so on the way home I told the crowd. Laugh! How they laughed! Even if the joke was on them.

AND THE HORSE IS GONE

The [Honorable?] Samuel N. Bell built the Deer Park Hotel. He came to us and wanted us to advise him in building it, said he was going to make it as fine as money could do. I got acquainted with Mr. Bell, was sort of by accident. He used to come up to the Profile House when I was at the Black Mountain House, and often when I drove up there with parties, or by there, he'd wave to me from the [piazza?], or hello to me. Scraped an acquaintance that way. Easy man to get acquainted with.

As we went on with the building, Mr. Bell got to telling us that it was for us. Wanted us to manage it when he had it finished. “Make it the best hotel in the mountains, boys. It's going to be for you. Don't spare expense. Make it as you want it.” We became pretty friendly as the hotel went along, and he kept up telling us: “Have it just as you want it. It's going to be yours some day. Your're You're the man to run this thing.”

We opened the Deer Park Hotel the season of 1887, and it was crowded to overflowing. Mr. Bell enlarged it for the next season, practically doubled it. He was planning to double it again the next season when he died very suddenly, fell dead right in my arms.

The year before he died, my wife died, leaving me with five little children. I was discouraged clear to the bottom. I told Mr. Bell I was going to give up. I just hadn't the / heart to go on with his proposition. “Now, now, Willis,” he said to me, “ you don't want to give up. You can't give up. You've got to go on. The only thing that'll save you, get you on your feet again, is work — something to keep your mind busy. Don't lie down by the roadside. You can't. You've got five little children to look after. You can't leave me now, for your own sake and theirs.”

He kept me going. Samuel N. Bell was one splendid man — they don't make ‘em any finer.

I've got here a booklet of the Old Deer Park. This is what a high class summer hotel was like, back in the nineties, up in these mountains:

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“Looking north from the depot ...about seventy-five rods from the hotel ... you can see Mr Mt. Cannon, or Profile Mountain, Eagle Cliff, Lafayette, Lincoln, Haystack, Liberty, Flume, Big Coolidge, Little Coolidge Mountains. On the east, Whaleback, Potash, Hancock, Loon Pond and Russell Mountains. On the south, Plymouth Mountain and twenty-five miles down the Pemigewasset Valley. On the west, Mounts Moosilauke, Jim, Blue, and Kinsman, forming the finest mountain and valley scenery in New England... [Potash,

“The house is furnished throughout without regard to expense. The office, halls, and dining room are finished in oak, the parlors in white wood ... the halls are nine feet wide ... steam heat on the first and second floors, gas throughout the house.”

That gas was shipped up from Boston in barrels and dumped into a big underground tank behind the house. Gasoline, it was. We had a machine in the cellar which pumped it in and evaporated it into gas and sent it through the pipe lines, in the house, to the burners. We used those little white things to drop over the burners — Welsbach mantles. And we had big fireplaces on the first floor, three of them. The biggest one was in the office, and it was a huge one. When Dr. J.A.Greene was up there once, he wrote to a friend of his that we drove a [yoke?] of oxen right through the front door, dragging in a whole tree, and dumped it onto the fireplace, driving the oxen out the big door at the back. Dr. Greene was a great joker.

“Our beds are made of the best South American hair, forty pound mattresses. The / house will accomodate two hundred guests.... [?] [?]

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“There are fine groves of beautiful trees of all kinds around the hotel....

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“The Pemigewasset is inhabited by beautiful speckled trout in great abundance, making the finest fishing resort in the State....

“An abundant water supply, having a head of one hundred fifty feet, comes from Loon Mountain, through a three-inch iron pipe, with hydrants on either side of the house....

“Five hours ride from Boston without change of cars. Parlor cars direct from Boston without change. Fare, round trip, $6.30. insert [?] p. 9

“Our prices will be from $14 to $21 per week, according to length of stay and total number in room. Transient, $3.50 per day.”

Croquet and dancing were the two great enjoyments everybody could join in. Folks were crazy about dancing. Two or three times a week some dance would be going on, either in a hotel or private house. If it was winter, dancing was about the only thing folks could do for fun. That and sleigh rides. And sleigh rides weren't any fun unless there was a dance at the and of it. The program used to be a big sleigh ride, from miles around, heading to a dance. Then, in out of the cold and a hot supper. Then dance, dance, dance. Then more dancing. And about midnight another supper. The usual thing — oysters. Then more dancing. They danced in those days. Nobody went home till four o'clock in the morning.

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And they danced on spring floors. I don't know how they built them, but they teetered up and down, and when the crowd got going on them, those old spring floors would jump around some, too.

We managed that hotel for eight years. It was the time when all the big mountain hotels were going full steam, crowded with guests all summer long. Of course, we had a poor season now and then, but for the most part business rushed. People \ would come in families, stay from three or four weeks to all summer, came again the next summer, and the next. It was what you might call regular trade with many people. We could plan on

our supplies, our food, our help. Now, with the automobile, it's here to-day and gone to-morrow, stop maybe for dinner, perhaps for a night or tow two , and flit on.

And the horse is gone, as it used to be. The six-horse, four-horse rigs, [/Spanking?] horses, silver-mounted harnesses, head plumes, carryalls, twelve-passenger wagons — carmine bodies with yellow wheels — all gone. Roads up through the mountains gay with flashing rigs, all summer long. No more of them. And look at the business that went along with the horse. I'd carry parties on a week's trip through the mountains, stop at a hotel come night, put up the horses. And other parties would come to my hotel same way. Now the automobile makes a trip in a day which took horses a week. No hotel stops except perhaps for dinner, and a good many carry their dinners along and make use of the hotel as a picnic ground. Leave home in the morning, back again at night, and the only feed is gasoline. A lot of business went with the horse.